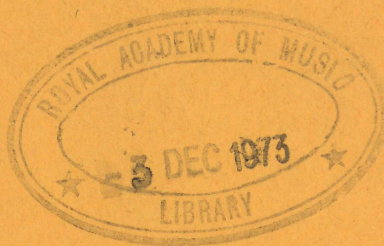


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ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

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B U L L E T I N

NO. 10, AUTUMN TERM 1973

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MONDAY

11.30 am Duke's Hall

Recital of Music by Samuel Barber

Penelope Price-Jones (soprano)
Philip Martin (piano)

Hermit's Song
Nocturne for piano
Three James Joyce Poems
Piano Sonata

2.30 pm Lecture Hall

Memoirs of an Impresario

Wilfrid Van Wyck talks to Sidney Harrison
(see below)

7.00 pm Theatre

Offenbach: La jolie Parfumeuse

TUESDAY

11.30 am Lecture Hall

'The Spy from Istanbul'

An illustrated recital of Turkish Music given by Arman Ratip (piano), whose L.P. of this title was released recently.

2.30 pm Duke's Hall

Contemporary Music Concert

A concert devoted entirely to the music of Luciano Berio, given by the Manson Ensemble.

The programme will include 'Tempi Concertate' conducted by Simon Rattle, and 'O King' from sinfonia (Kathryn Harries - Soprano)

Berio has written seven works called Sequenzas for solo instruments, which show off the instrumentalist's virtuosity. We shall hear No. 1 for flute, played by

Ingrid Culliford, No.5 for trombone, played by Roger Williams and No.6 for viola, played by Beverley Davison.

7.00 pm Theatre

Offenbach: 'La jolite Parfumeuse'

WEDNESDAY

11.15 am Lecture Hall

A Historical Introduction to the Chinese Exhibition at Burlington House

Mrs. Gillian Darby

Senior Music Assistant, Far Eastern Section, Victoria and Albert Museum.

7.30 pm Duke's Hall

Repertoire Orchestra Concert (Conductor Maurice Miles)

The programme will include Tchaikovsky's 'Rococo' Variations, with Catherine Giles as soloist. Other works in the programme will be Alan Bush's Dorian Passacaglia and Fugue, Fauré's 'Pelléas et Mélisande' Suite, Berlioz's Overture 'Béatrice et Bénédict', the second movement of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony, and Gordon Jacob's 'William Byrd Suite'.

THURSDAY

11.00 am Theatre

Central School of Speech and Drama

Theatre Workshop Performance

'Buckshot and Bows'

followed by 'Open Discussion'

2.45 p.m. Duke's Hall

Concert

Mahler: Symphony No.2
(Conductor Simon Rattle)

Wagner: Siegfried Idyll
(Director Clive Conway-Gwilliam)

6.00 pm Lecture Hall

Redcliffe Concerts of British Music

'The British Composer Today'

Jonathan Harvey

Francis Routh

(see below)

FRIDAY

11.30 am Lecture Hall

Peter Cunliffe of the Royal College of Art (Printmaking School)

Mr. Cunliffe's work is much involved with sound in combination with visual experience. He will show films to illustrate his work, and will discuss the potentialities of cross-fertilisation in the field of music, art, theatre, dance, 'happenings', etc.

2.30 pm Lecture Hall

Film: 'Far from the Madding Crowd'

Music score by Richard Rodney Bennett.

Julie Christie, Terence Stamp, Peter Finch, Alan Bates.

This powerful story of love and turbulent relationships, set amid the rolling countryside of Thomas Hardy's beloved Wessex, shows Bathsheba, a young woman irrevocably entangled with the three utterly contrasting men who enter her life.

7.30 pm Duke's Hall

Chamber Orchestra Concert (Conductor Norman Del Mar)

The programme will consist of Bach's Suite No.4 in D, Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, and Strauss's 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme' Suite.

6.00 pm Lecture Hall
 Redcliffe Concerts of British Music

The British Company Today

Jonathan Harvey
 Francis Routh
 (see below)

FRIDAY

11.30 am Lecture Hall

Peter Cunliffe of the Royal College of Art (Prinsepark School)

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Film: 'For from the Madding Crowd'

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Chamber Orchestra Concert (Conductor Norman Del Mar)

The programme will consist of Bach's Suite No. 4 in D, Bartok's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, and Strauss's 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme' Suite.

Concert

Admission Free (Suggested Contribution)

Programme

(Director: Norman Del Mar)

WILFRID VAN WYCK - FORTY YEARS OF CONCERTS

Keith Nurse

(reproduced by kind permission of 'The Daily Telegraph')

Not surprisingly for a man who is now in his late sixties and has spent over forty highly successful years in London as a concert agent and promoter, Wilfrid Van Wyck has detected a 'big wind of change' blowing through the business.

Some months ago the big agency group, London Management, took over the business which bore his name for forty years, but he remained as managing director until his recent retirement. The word 'retirement', however, suggests a finality that patently does not apply to a man of Van Wyck's experience and abilities. He is continuing to operate on a freelance basis, representing a small number of clients, including the remarkable Artur Rubinstein, now eighty-five.

It was in 1932 that Wilfrid Van Wyck, a somewhat brash but purposeful newcomer to the concert agency business, was appointed to represent Rubinstein in Britain. At that time he was obtaining engagements for the pianist at £30 a time. Rubinstein was his first major client, but there were many others to follow, outstanding figures such as Iturbi, Süsskind, Klemperer, Flagstad, Hofmann, and more recently Fou Ts'ong.

On a number of levels Mr. Van Wyck finds things have changed, dramatically in some cases. There has been a dismal decline in business ethics and general standards of courtesy and consideration, he says, with an air of almost old-fashioned indignation. And negligence in the simple matter of replying to correspondence, he adds, is quite appalling.

One notable musical change - that applies throughout the world - has been the decline in the size of audiences for recitals. In his view this stems from the lack of truly great personalities, such as Kreisler, Richard Tauber, Rachmaninov and John McCormack, performers who had that rare 'general appeal' quality that enabled them to reach out to the public at large. Musically, suggests Mr. Van Wyck, they spoke from the heart. Corny but true. Rubinstein 'is one of the last of the great old-timers. He plays from the heart; a disciplined heart, but nevertheless the message comes from the heart.'

Average playing standards, he concedes, have risen enormously. And, again on the credit side, there has been a tremendous increase in the interest in chamber and orchestral music. Yet many of today's musicians, he suggests ruefully, are simply trying to mature too fast; they attempt too much too quickly so that their performances lack maturity and depth. No names - that would be unfair - but many performances today are simply 'half-baked'. Technical skill and photographic memories are no substitute for great music that has not been properly digested and interpreted. A performer needs to 'live' the great works.

Today's performers need good advice - which, naturally, presupposes a good relationship between musician and agent. An agent needs also to display initiative, determination and a fair share of diplomatic skill. It was by displaying these very skills that Van Wyck brought off his major coup in 1936 when he brought to Britain the Dresden State Opera from Nazi Germany. It all started from a casual suggestion made to him at a London tea party. The following day the eager thirty-two-year-old Van Wyck set off for Germany.

He succeeded in signing up the company but was told by its officials that they could not give him a fee; he would have to stand or fall, on a commission basis, by the success or otherwise of the visit. After all, he was told, they had been given to understand that a large proportion of the London music audience was Jewish and boycotts could be expected. Instead, the performances were all sold out six months in advance. Van Wyck recalls in particular the glittering first night at Covent Garden, with German dignitaries giving Nazi salutes 'all over the place'.

What Mr. Van Wyck has witnessed over the years has indeed been a formidable wind of change.

BRITISH COMPOSERS' WORKS IN PERFORMANCE

Francis Routh

A series of articles for 'Composer' to investigate what actually happens when new British music is performed and to discover ways and means of encouraging more professional performances.

(reproduced by kind permission of 'Composer')

Among the many freedoms we are fortunate enough to enjoy in England is the freedom of artistic expression. Anyone who so wishes is free to put on any concert he chooses; to 'do his own thing' with reference to nothing except the dictates of his own fancy. He may indulge his unrestrained spirit of self-expression to his heart's desire. Many do. Whether the finished product will merit the daunting and somewhat majestic title of art-work, and withstand scrutiny as such, is of course another question; nor must it be assumed that it will necessarily command the attention of an audience. But what is important is that there is in London now, and in the country as a whole, less hold to convention, less fettering of the creative imagination, than there has been for many years. Indeed not really since the high-noon of the Renaissance in England, under the first Elizabeth and her successor, has the musical barometer been so 'set fair'. Great rewards are there, if only we as composers can reap them.

Nevertheless contemporary music in this country today stands at a particularly critical juncture; it holds out rich possibilities for the future, yet at the same time is beset with grave problems, not to say dangers, that threaten its very existence. The wealth of creative talent that there is in England now requires only a channel, an outlet, through which it can reach fulfilment. That this is not happening as much as it should is a matter of the closest concern to all of us; or it ought to be.

An enormous quantity of new music is now being written, good, bad and indifferent, for every medium, to suit every taste. Of course a high proportion is destined to fall by the wayside; the law of averages alone will ensure that, apart from other aesthetic reasons. But what matters is that the music which does merit performance should receive it, as of right.

So the first problem appears to be to ensure that the various pressures and sectional interests, which are inseparable from the commercial production and dissemination of music, should at least not impede this overriding and basic necessity. If possible

they should further it.

But against this, and militating directly contrary to the true interests of our musical well-being, are several potent anti-creative forces. Certainly they may be difficult to pin down; at best one can only generalise, somewhat inadequately; but their effects, it seems to me, are beyond dispute.

First, the unsatisfactory representation of the British composer in large sections of our concert life, is a fact which needs no demonstration.

Second, the peculiarly English reserve, or caution-of-character, which amounts practically to a national inferiority complex, is equally noticeable in the planning and management of concerts and festivals.

Third, commercialism, if unchecked, can lead to artistic stagnation.

Fourth, there is not only the lack of a generally accepted aesthetic standard, but, what is worse, something else is substituted for it. Criticism is clearly one way of weighing and measuring the currency of new ideas; though we should bear in mind that critics are neither composers nor executants, and can only report externally, and second-hand. But another pointer might be reasonably expected from the academic world; a world which seems to have signally failed to give a lead in this respect. It is interesting that a magazine has recently been running a series of articles about the study of music at a university, contributed by various selected professors. Not one of them, so far, has included the discovery and establishing of aesthetic standards among his academic priorities. In fact, the word 'aesthetics' is nowhere to be seen, until the sixth article - written, significantly, by an American. An aesthetic attitude is what primarily enables one to assess music; it is of the first importance when considering contemporary music.

This lack of a secure aesthetic standard has, among other things, led to an ambivalent attitude to the British composer, which often finds an outlet in various forms of escape, or aggression; maybe an exclusiveness of outlook, maybe an intellectual superiority, maybe indifference. At all events, any reasoned advocacy of British music, such as these admass days of popular reporting and conversational journalism seem to call for, is for the most part ruled out. Unfortunately it is precisely such advocacy that is needed, and without it today's unfamiliar contemporary music stands that much less chance of reaching the ears of an audience, or getting into the bloodstream, as it were, of our musical life.

Fifth, a reluctance on the part of many musicians to consider contemporary music with the same seriousness as the established repertoire of the past.

These are just some of the adverse factors today, which are in such marked contradiction to those more positive features already mentioned. Is it possible, by balancing these two sides of the equation, to discover how, if at all, the situation may be improved? The present article is intended to initiate such an enquiry into this particular situation in all its aspects, hoping that some way forward, more equitable than we have yet found, may perhaps reveal itself.

Let us start from what we know to be true. First, it is incontestable that, for the composer, performance matters. Until his new score is performed it remains in limbo. Only in sound does the imagined music take wing and live.

But before his work can be performed, he needs two other essential groups of people - performers and audience. As far as the performer is concerned, our musical society is performer-orientated, more than composer-orientated. After all, it is the performer on the platform who is more in the public eye, who has much more immediate contact with the audience, and who can more readily be clothed with an 'image', than the composer.

As for the audience, the third point in the triangle, this is the imponderable element. The audience may be large or small, warm or cold, well-briefed or ill-prepared. The lack of aesthetic standard already mentioned is chiefly deleterious in its effect on the audience's receptivity to new music; yet in a sense the public's general view and attitude towards the wide-ranging phenomenon of contemporary music are at least of equal importance as the performance of the music itself. A negative aesthetic attitude can largely nullify a performance.

Now it may be true - it is certainly the assumption on which countless promoters go about their business - that to be certain of your audiences, you must give them well-known performers playing well-known music. If this is so, (and it is a devastating assumption), how is it possible to bring forward the new, the unknown, with some reasonable degree of responsibility, yet without straightaway and automatically losing the ear of the audience? How indeed! Ideally, at least part of the answer is, by so arranging, and revolutionizing, our affairs that what is new is not entirely unknown; by correct advocacy and publicity; by inviting the audience to expect what they are about to hear. This indeed would put a fresh complexion on things, if our papers and radio programmes were to discuss constructively beforehand a composer's new work. This would give criticism a new function, it would assume a relevance and importance quite different, and out of all proportion, to what it has now.

But in our far from ideal world, how are new works performed? A time-honoured device is to slip them into otherwise conservative and blameless concerts - this is the accepted policy for most orchestras on those rare occasions when they venture into the field of British music. The trouble is that their public may come, as it were, on the wrong terms, often under false pretences. And even if they are prepared to sit, stoically gritting their teeth, through one novelty, before they reach the familiar music they have really come to hear, it is more than doubtful whether the new piece will receive a proper and sympathetic hearing in such circumstances.

Equally unsatisfactory, it seems to me, is the 'public rehearsal' or 'workshop', at which new works are played through as if with a question mark suspended over them. This places the audience in an unreal and false position, that of arbiter. The performance is not a concert, and those taking part are not necessarily committed to what they are playing; it is more in the nature of an audition, to which the audience is supposed to supply the answer - namely whether the music merits performance at all.

We cannot overlook the central importance of our audience; and public concerts are not the only means of hearing new music. The making and distributing of recordings is of course the other possibility. It is, in one sense, of more use to us that a new work should be recorded, and sell 500 copies, than that it should be heard, once, by 500 people in a concert hall. Of course such recordings, without subsidy, will be beyond the scope of commercial recording companies, and very little headway has so far been made in this field.

If we are to improve the present position, let us honestly ask what happens when contemporary music is performed, and consider the motivation and impact of such concerts with no other criteria than musical ones. There is, for instance, a peculiar mystique surrounding premières, so much so that 'contemporary British' and 'first performance' are usually taken to be synonymous terms. Only the first performance, it is assumed, is the genuine one; subsequent performances are notoriously more difficult to achieve, perhaps because they do not appear to reflect credit on performers or management.

In many cases, no doubt, the first performance is also the last; but if a score is put into a concert, whether first performance or not, and earns a committed performance from its interpreters, as well as the respect of its audience, what prevents its wider propagation today? Why does an excellent work - proven in performance - face extinction after its première? This indeed is a central question.

If one is rash enough to fly in the face of the accumulated trends of today, and to challenge public taste by performing music which is not a première, which falls in with no special occasion, such as an anniversary, and whose only claim on our attention is that it happens to be an excellent work, what is the audience-result?

Let us take an example of two recent programmes given by the Redcliffe Concerts. Just possibly the facts and figures of these, when compared, may suggest an answer; though where audiences are concerned any conclusions are bound to be speculative and non-scientific.

Concert 1 John Williams (guitar) Rohan de Saram (cello)
 Rafael Puyana (harpsichord) Druvi de Saram (piano)

Music by Stephen Dodgson

Sonata	for cello and piano
Fantasy-Divisions	for guitar
Duo Concertante	for guitar and harpsichord
* *	* *
Inventions	for harpsichord
Five Occasional Pieces	for cello and piano

Concert 2 John Ogdon (piano)

Sonata No. 2	Michael Tippett
Five Pieces, Op. 2	Maxwell Davies
Four Studies	Alan Rawsthorne
Ballade	Alan Rawsthorne
Contrasts (1st perf.)	Gerard Schurmann
* *	* *
Scherzo	Lennox Berkeley
Reflections (1st perf.)	Andrzej Panufnik
Sonata No. 1	Michael Tippett

Both concerts had great merit, in different ways. Both represented performances of an extremely high standard, by artists of international repute; both contained some music that, for the most part, would probably not otherwise have been heard; neither contained music that could truthfully be called 'familiar'; in neither case was there any audience-preparation beforehand in press or in radio discussion. So, apart from the obvious facts that one was a single-composer concert, while the other was not, and that the instruments differed, it is not unreasonable to compare the two. The first filled the Queen Elizabeth Hall; the second, in the same hall, drew an audience of only 157 people.

ART, ITS MEANING AND VALUE

Malcolm Stewart

It is impossible to say precisely whether art in the abstract has anything to do with politics, reality, the mind, individuals, the masses or anything in particular: there are as many different interpretations of a work of art as there are people who experience it. In the broadest terms there are two distinct kinds of art today: serious art that follows a respected intellectual tradition, and popular commercial art whose impact is mainly ephemeral. This distinction is often blurred - and rightly so, since the two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The serious creative artist argues that, although working in what may seem, at times, a self-centred isolation, he is producing art of 'quality': quality without regard for popularity. If an artist chooses to speak to a public rather than speaking for himself, he can only do so by stressing general characteristics (often a synonym for obvious characteristics). This is a predicament of the outright commercial artist: he must angle his work to satisfy a current taste. In contrast the serious artist, whose motivation is fundamentally different, simply places his work before the public in the hope that audiences will see as much in it as the artist himself.

If one can accept that a great deal of popular art is artistically of little value in the abstract because of this reversal of priorities (i.e. popularity before quality), it follows that an opinion of value based on commercial success can be misleading when considering the work of a serious artist. All this indicates a value judgement of some kind: who, therefore, will decide? Is anyone qualified to decide (a) what a work 'means'; (b) whether it is a good work? No one is qualified to answer (a), but some suggestions can be made about (b).

I will take (a) first. One cannot say with any precision what one single work of art really 'means': there is no ultimate meaning to which everyone adheres. In this sense it is a very life-like situation: I cannot tell what the next man's reaction to an experience in life may be - we could be poles apart in reaction. There will probably be a common feeling of joy or sorrow about a particular experience, but within this general emotion there will be countless subtle differences of feeling that strike each of us in a different way. However hard we try there seems little hope of uncovering the ultimate truth in any given situation: after a certain point there is no obvious common ground between the feelings of two people towards a particular experience - one's reaction depends entirely on which detail one selects. Art has fewer concrete details than life: it depends more on an appreciation of the abstract, whether this is an intuitive or considered response. Immediately one attempts to evaluate the abstract, individual preferences are brought into play to a far greater extent than they are in life. The details to be taken into account are innumerable. In art (and especially music, which is most abstract of all the arts), the number of relevant details is countless, depending on the individual. It is because of the abstract nature of art that there is little hope of extensive common ground in opinion between any two people, let alone groups of people. Even when expressing an opinion we must do so in words to enable us to communicate. Works of literature, although they may be dealing in the abstract, use language as the medium of expression: consequently it is fair to discuss these works using the medium itself - words. Art and music, however, pose quite different problems. It is not easy to discuss either in terms of ordinary language; although one can explain a great deal, for example, about a poem, it is a different matter to use the same technique with a painting or a piece of music - one is forced to view the work at one remove. Language is quite inadequate in this case, and apart from the statement of broad technicalities, it is difficult to envisage a painting or piece of music that would

gain through mere verbal description or interpretation.

If we are unable to decide with any precision what a work of art 'means', (b) - the question of whether it is a good work - might seem redundant. If there is no absolute meaning, how can we begin to evaluate it so that our evaluation meets with general acceptance? Is anyone entitled to make value judgements? Although it is fascinating to have no answer to (a), it would be depressing to be in such doubt about (b). One might argue that there are some absolute principles that apply to most works considered of value, such as structure, technique, clarity of thought; but these are too general to be anything more than vague indications. The problem is to avoid confusing one's individual taste in art with one's opinion of value: they are not necessarily the same thing. Taste in art is subjective, appreciation of its value (as far as this is possible) must be objective. An artist creates within a framework of his own making and it is his success within these chosen boundaries that has to be considered. It is clear that judgement based on, for example, the superficial matter of idiom is indefensible: a critic's task is one of understanding - he should discard his prejudices and approach the work in question on its own terms. The critic has to project himself into the mind of the artist; only then can he appreciate the limits that the artist has imposed - this is what we call 'understanding' a work of art. In fact, each work creates its own principles and must only be considered with reference to these principles: this way the critic avoids judging a work by standards that do not apply. Equally, a level-headed critic can often find himself respecting a work yet at the same time disliking it.

Art is not reality, it is only an imitation of reality. As the word 'art' suggests, the process is one of fabrication which, however skilful, can only amount to a representation of reality as we experience it. A novelist, however 'real' his characters and situations may appear, has to select details he is going to include: it might take volumes simply to describe every thought and mundane action of one man in four hours. The novelist may be closest to showing reality, but he still has to condense the details of this reality. A journalist, for example, can tape a long interview and then cut and re-shape it so that the original meaning is completely distorted. This is a part of the novelist's problem as well: in place of the journalist's tape the novelist uses 'life'; both have to be scrupulously condensed without losing the original truth - the important parts included, the irrelevant ones cut out. The artist's job, therefore, is one of illusion: the better the illusion, the more credible the work.

Illusion being the vital ingredient in all art forms, the artist must satisfy his audience throughout with his deception - otherwise the slender thread will be broken. It is revealing to take two extreme examples of illusion: on the one hand the exact reproduction of reality by photography, and on the other, the total artifice of opera. A photograph mirrors a split second of reality: but, strictly speaking, it is wrong to conclude that this is true reality. The word 'mirrors' is crucial: if I take a photograph of a carrot I cannot hold it up and then eat it as if it were actually a carrot - I am merely holding a photograph of a carrot. The concrete reality of the carrot is at one remove, that remove being the process of photography. Opera is arguably the most artificial of art forms; it exists within formal conventions that have no bearing on our experience of concrete reality. Yet however grotesque these conventions may be, they do not prevent audiences from relating the intellectual and emotional (i.e. abstract) content of the work to their experience of life. In fact they may derive more emotional satisfaction from it because the emphasis is concentrated on the emotional and the abstract rather than the physical.

If art condenses reality, it can also colour reality in a new and revealing way. We

may view certain aspects of existence with more pleasure because of our experience of a work of art: an artist can reveal beauty in most unlikely places. Our perception of both concrete and abstract reality can be altered dramatically in this way. Beauty, after all, is always in the eye of the beholder and can be found perhaps anywhere, depending on the inclination of the individual. There is no definition of beauty - no 'right' or 'wrong'. We cannot alter the fact of concrete reality, but our perception and interpretation of this reality can be as individual as each one of us wishes. In fact, each of us has an ability in common with the artist: everyone looks at reality in his own way - but of course it is only the artist who can actually communicate a new interpretation to others.

The works of Mozart, Beethoven, Rembrandt and Dante are no less communicative today than at the time they were created. The conclusion is obvious: art can exist outside its own temporal (and thus material) context. It may be affected by social conditions prevailing at the time of its creation, but this need not diminish its relevance a hundred years later. Why is this? The conclusion again is clear: art is more than a mere representation of the outward reality and thought of its period - it satisfies human emotions that are common to all societies irrespective of time. Societies may change radically, but the common factor of them all is the human factor: no matter how much outward appearance may have changed, the needs of the human mind and senses have changed far less. Our present cultural attitudes bear this out - we seem as interested (if not more so) in the art of the past than that of the present. The influence of the artist, then, is not necessarily confined to a particular period; his relevance can be not only universal but timeless.

What is the artist's attitude to the society in which he lives, and equally important, what is society's attitude to the artist? If the artist had a choice in an ideal world he would choose independence: he would admit no responsibility towards his public. As society stands today, does he in fact have a responsibility? There are two points to be balanced up here: art and finance. If an artist accepts public aid for the furtherance of his work, does he have an obligation to let society hear what it wants to hear - and if society gives him this financial support, has it any right to expect the artist to deliver the right kind of goods?

An artist's work is as individual as his mind: we grant the right of free individual opinion to everyone, surely we must do the same to the artist when it is his mind that we value so highly. Few would argue with the artist being given his intellectual freedom, so the only responsibility he could possibly have is a straightforward social one: just as a shop meets a customer's demand at the appropriate price, the artist, on being paid, should conform to similar laws relating to demand and the value of the goods he is supplying. But is this analogy really fair to the artist? Should he be subject to this kind of pressure? If we consider artists are worth having, then we must grant them freedom from this kind of obligation - artistic value can never be equated with financial value or any other value: either we free the artist from his moral obligation to please, or we have no true artists at all. His privileges are few in our society, yet any he does acquire are instantly challenged because he produces a commodity for which there is little demand. However, whether an artist is in contact with a public or not is irrelevant: the gap between the artist and society is certainly wider today than before (for a variety of reasons, few of them the artist's fault), but there is no reason to suppose that the quality of art has declined. There are inferior artists today just as there have always been, there is nothing peculiarly contemporary about this. In order to find masterpieces of the past, one must sift through volumes of work mostly by minor artists until one comes across a work of real value. Yet a masterpiece is the product of the same principle of 'free expression' that can also give rise to so much mediocrity. The artist's relationship

with society may be more critical today than at any time in history, but does the fault necessarily lie with the artist? A simple lesson of history shows that neither great nor even good art is automatically greeted with immediate popular approval - it is often inferior art that the public will quickly respond to and then almost as soon discard. Why should the same law not apply today - is it invalid because we have so many 'difficult' artists?

Instead of criticising the serious artist for not being in touch with his public, we should do a great deal more to help him. Society, in drawing up priorities, bases them on the needs of majorities rather than minorities. This may work well enough socially, but artistically it can lead to the neglect of the 'quality' artist with a minority audience. The commercial artist can manage on his own; it is the 'quality' artist who needs to be supported so as to balance the success of the commercial artist. It is a short-sighted policy to forget about the 'quality' artist because (a) commercial art satisfies so many, and (b) few people want 'quality' art. In the long run it can only lead to the erosion of serious art and its values. An artistic statement is a personal statement: if restricted, it becomes merely a diluted version of the original - and this is not a quality of great art. If society values artists then it must give them the freedom of expression so highly prized in other spheres.

COMPOSERS VISIT THE R. A. M.

Paul Patterson

The Academy was honoured to receive a distinguished visitor on 2nd November, when Christof Penderecki came to meet the students and talk about his music. Those present were deeply impressed by his charm and modesty, and were aware of an immense integrity in the discussion of his revolutionary ideas. He played a recording of his Partita, which is shortly to be released in this country, and we were privileged to be the first over here to have had a preview of this composition.

He was touched by the warm welcome he was given by staff and students of the Academy, and looks forward to a return visit to his friends at the Academy in the not-too-distant future. His visit here was, of course, associated with his brief stay in London for the premières of 'The Devils of Loudon' at the Coliseum, and his first Symphony performed by the L. S. O. at the Royal Festival Hall.

Another distinguished composer to visit the R. A. M. this term will be Lennox Berkeley who will be talking about his third Symphony in the Manson Room at 2 p.m. on Monday 10th December.

